

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL ZAGREB UNN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1437

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, YO US NATO

SUBJECT: PETRIC COMMENTS ON DISPUTE WITH ITALIANS
OVER ZONE "B"

REF: BELGRADE 1360

1. AT END OF HIS MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR MARCH 27 (SEE
SEPTELS FOR DISCUSSIONS ON U-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS AND
SPECIAL SESSION UNGA) ACTING FONSEC PETRIC REPEATED
WHAT DIZDAREVIC HAD SAID TO AMBASSADOR ON MARCH 22 (REFTEL):
HE WAS GENUINELY PUZZLED WHY ITALIAN GOVT AT THIS TIME WAS
CREATING AN ISSUE OVER TRIESTE ZONE "B". PETRIC SAID
SEVERAL TIMES THERE CAN BE NO PROGRESS ON ZONE "B"
ISSUE OR PROBABLY "ANYTHING ELSE" WITH ITALIANS UNTIL
ITALIANS FORMALLY WITHDRAW POSITION PUT FORWARD
IN THEIR NOTE.

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2. AMBASSADOR SAID US WAS SORRY TO SEE TWO FRIENDS

EMBROILED IN UNPLEASANT DISPUTE. HE HOPED BOTH SIDES WOULD TRY TO TAKE HEAT OUT OF THE ISSUE. HEAVY-HANDED MEDIA TREATMENT WOULD NOT HELP RESOLVE PROBLEM.

3. PETRIC REPORTED "SOME IN YUGOSLAVIA" ARE SAYING THAT NATO STANDS BEHIND ITALIANS' "REVANCHIST POSTURE" IN THIS DISPUTE, THAT IT IS NO COINCIDENCE NATO MILITARY EXERCISES TAKING PLACE AT THIS TIME ON ADRIATIC COAST NEAR YUGOSLAVIA (EXERCISE DARK IMAGE 74; BELGRADE 1365), AND THAT US REQUEST TO HAVE DESTROYERS VISIT RIJEKA AT THIS TIME (MADE IN OUR DIPLOMATIC NOTE OF JAN 21) WAS ALSO LINKED TO DISPUTE.

4. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL CHAGRIN THAT PETRIC WOULD REPEAT, EVEN PRIVATELY, SUCH PATENTLY FALSE CHARGES. HE ASSURED PETRIC US AND NATO DID NOT SUPPORT REVANCHISM ON PART ANYONE, ANYWHERE. HE SAID YUGOSLAVS ARE AWARE THAT NATO EXERCISES PETRIC MENTIONED WERE PLANNED LONG IN ADVANCE AND HAD NOTHING AT ALL TO DO WITH CURRENT DISPUTE OVER ZONE "B". PETRIC INTERJECTED THAT TIMING OF EXERCISES WAS UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCE AND THEY COULD HAVE BEEN CANCELLED. AMBASSADOR WENT ON TO SAY THAT COURTESY CALLS BY OUR SHIPS IN THE THREE YUGOSLAV PORTS OPEN FOR SUCH VISITS ALSO PLANNED MONTHS IN ADVANCE AND, MORE IMPORTANT, OUR SHIP VISITS WERE INTENDED AS GOODWILL GESTURES AND HAD NO RELEVANCE TO CURRENT YUGOSLAV-ITALIAN TENSIONS. AMBASSADOR HOPED PETRIC WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO CONVINCE YUGOSLAV COLLEAGUES HARBORING SUCH IDEAS THAT SPREADING UNFOUNDED, IRRESPONSIBLE CHARGES COULD ONLY WORSEN ATMOSPHERE AND SOUR US-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS.

5. ACTING FONSEC REPEATED DIZDAREVIC'S THREAT TO MAKE PUBLIC THE PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS HELD IN PAST COUPLE YEARS WITH ITALIANS OVER TRIESTE QUESTION (REFTEL) IF ITALIANS DID NOT WITHDRAW THEIR POSITION. HE REFERRED PARTICULARLY TO SECRET UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN MINIC AND MEDICI IN MARCH 1973 AT MEETING IN DUBROVNIK, WHICH WAS COMPLETELY AT VARIANCE WITH CURRENT ITALIAN POSITION. LATTER, PETRIC NOTED, WAS NOT ONLY WRONG AND CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICALLY UNWISE BUT COMPLETELY INCONSISTENT WITH CURRENT ITALIAN PRACTICE OF MAINTAINING CONSULATE IN KOPER, ZONE "B". HE HAD REMINDED ITALIAN AMBASSADOR OF THIS ABSURD INCONSISTENCY, NOTING THAT UNPRECEDENTED FOR NATION TO KEEP CONSULAR REPRESENTATION IN TERRITORY IT CLAIMED AS ITS OWN.

6. PETRIC SAID HE WANTED TO EMPHASIZE TO AMBASSADOR

DEPTH OF DETERMINATION OF YUGOSLAV PEOPLE TO DEFEND THEIR
LAND AT ALL COSTS AGAINST CHALLENGES FROM ANY QUARTER.
HE DID NOT EXPECT US TO INTERVENE IN DISPUTE, HE
RECOGNIZED TO A DEGREE VALIDITY OF US POSITION THAT THIS
IS BILATERAL ISSUE BUT HE WOULD REMIND US THAT US AND UK
HAD STATED AT TIME OF SIGNING LONDON AGREEMENT (1954) THEY
WOULD NEVER SUPPORT "APPETITES" OF EITHER YUGOSLAVIA OR
ITALY FOR TERRITORY IN ZONES ADMINISTERED BY OTHER SIDE.
TOON

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